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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 004426

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS: GOK REQUESTS UN  
VALIDATION OF IRAQ-KUWAIT BORDER

REF: KUWAIT 3878

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron by reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

1. (C) Summary: Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Shaykh Dr. Mohammed Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah called the Ambassador and British Ambassador Christopher Wilton to his office on December 18 to provide background on the GOK's request to activate a clause in UNSCR 833, requiring the UN to ensure that border posts on the Iraq-Kuwait border remain at correct coordinates. Border security is a growing concern for the GOK because it wants to prevent additional incursions and safeguard itself from terrorist infiltration. The GOK wants the UN to assume responsibility for integrity of the border and requested the ambassadors relay that message to their respective capitals. End Summary.

Without UNIKOM, No Border Verification

2. (SBU) In accordance with UNSCR 833 of 1993, the UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) demarcated the border, agreed upon bilaterally in 1963, with precise coordinates for the first time. UNIKOM erected concrete posts and patrolled the border. A clause in 833 stipulated UN maintenance of the physical representation of the border. Responding to the British Ambassador's question about the most recent verification of border posts, the FM said it may have happened two years ago, if ever. He contended that the UN viewed border verification as unnecessary while UNIKOM was present. UNIKOM's mandate expired in 2003, and the GOK is now requesting the UN contract a third party to ensure the border is still properly demarcated.

Alleged Iraq-Kuwait Border Incursions

3. (C) The FM mentioned that recent alleged border incursions is one of two reasons for increased concern about proper demarcation. The GOK claims a British company, under an Iraqi contract, constructed a fence that crosses into Kuwait. The British Ambassador said the Interim Iraqi Government (IIG) shared with him a picture supposedly illustrating construction of a Kuwaiti pipeline that enters into Iraq. In his view, the photo did not substantiate the allegation. The FM confirmed the existence of a pipeline that lies, according to an aide, five meters within Kuwaiti territory, preventing the cross-border movement of vehicles but not of people or animals. The FM admitted that the alleged incursions seem minor, but they are incursions nonetheless. The IIG solution to the border problem, said the FM, is the creation of an Iraq-Kuwait commission to ensure that the coordinates are properly delineated today. This Iraqi suggestion has raised suspicions in Kuwait that the Iraqis were re-opening the issue of the border.

Keep Terrorist Threat Out of Kuwait

4. (C) The second reason for growing border concerns, the FM added, is terrorist infiltration. The FM said that while there is a focus on preventing terrorist elements from entering Iraq from neighboring countries, the GOK wants to prevent terrorists from crossing into Kuwait from Iraq. The GOK does not want the daily terrorist threat plaguing Iraq to seep into Kuwait.

5. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.

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